**What motivated the Explorers in the 15th Century?**

1. **Taxes- Ottoman Taxes on Goods that went through their Empire. The Ottomans dominated the Asia Minor and the Near East in the early 14th Century and in 1453 conquered the Byzantines gaining complete control of the Trade Routes. This created a financial incentive to find alternative ways to get to the East.**
2. **Increased Trade- From the early 13th Century when Ghengis Khan and the Mongols gained control of The Silk Road there was a significant increase in trade-fueling a demand for Asian goods in Europe.**
3. **Plague- After 1/3rd of Europe was killed in the Plague there was a shortage of labor, leading to an increase in the slave trade**
4. **Prince Henry the Navigator- Although not an explorer himself, the explorations along the west coast of Africa as well as the Canary Islands and Azores gave sailors a better understanding of trade winds.**
5. **The Printing Press- In the 1450s Guttenberg invented the first Printing Press which made the transfer of knowledge far easier so information became more available to everyone.**
6. **Inventions- Astrolabe and Compass (both came from other areas, Near East and China) made navigation much safer.**
7. **Humanism- Search for knowledge, allowed people to more freely question past knowledge, many people began to believe that the World was not flat but round.**
8. **Stupidity- Columbus made an incredible flaw when he postulated that the distance from Spain to Japan was 2500 miles**
9. **Proselytism- Competition between Christianity and Islam, led many to want to advance the faith by converting people to Christianity.**
10. **Consolidation and Nationalism- As nations such as Portugal, Spain as well as England (and later France) unified they began to explore for status, competition and wealth.**
11. **Sugar- an incredibly valuable commodity, the Azores Islands and Canary which Henry explored, developed several Sugar plantations that helped bring much wealth to Portugal.**
12. **Cartography- Map making became better (though still really really bad) as knowledge spread.**